

Washington County Ag Report

June 8, 2004

Contributors are Sandy Buxton, Colleen Converse, Aaron Gabriel, Laura McDermott, and JJ Schell.

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over and over again, but expecting a different result. – Albert Einstein

Announcements

FIELD CROP SCOUTING, COME EARN A PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION CREDIT BY SCOUTING WITH ME FOR ONE HOUR:

Tuesday, June 15 @ 11 am, Hollister Brothers' Farm, Hollister Rd., Whitehall

Sat. June 12 Livestock Health Meetings- When to call the vet?! Two meetings- (1) 9am-noon at Elihu farm covering sheep and goats in Easton and (2) 2-5pm at Ledge Knoll Farm covering Beef Cattle in White Creek. \$10 per person per meeting (no lunch). Visit the website www.cce.cornell.edu/washington or call 746-2560 for more info or to register.

Saturday, June 12th, 9-4, Christmas Tree Growers Workshop, Sunny Crest Tree Farm in Kingsbury. NYS DEC Pesticide Credits will be available. Cost is \$30/person. Pre-Register by June 10th. Call 668-4881 to register. We will take walk-in registration.

Monday June 14, 10 am - 12 noon, Solar Water Pumping Workshop, sponsored by the Judson Mohawk RC&D Council, at 1024 Route 66, Ghent, NY. Call 518-828-4385.

Tues-Thurs, July 20-22 Dairy Tour to PA – a three-day bus trip to 6 farms (including Amish farm), New Holland plant, and battlefield. See new ideas and old in action. Registration on a first come-first served basis. Call 272-4210 for more information.

Sun. June 20. 11am – 4pm, Garlic and Herb Information Day. Held at the Garlic Delight Farm, State Road 170 about 2 miles north of Little Falls, NY, across the highway from the Little Falls Municipal Golf Course. \$5. Sponsored by the Mohawk Valley Garlic and Herb Growers. 315/823-4488 or garliceli@aol.com

9 AM - noon, Sat., June 26. Basic Pruning Workshop. A hands-on workshop with guided instruction, practice in the Arboretum's collection and talk about the wheres and whys of pruning. Landis Arboretum, Esperance, NY (eastern Schoharie County, near Schenectady). \$30 per person. To register, 1-800-41-VISIT or tourism@schohariechamber.com

The COMPOST NETWORK is now on our website, with 28 listings so far. Take a look and you can email in your information to be listed. AG

New York Corn Grain and Silage Contest - call our office for the rules and procedures. Organized by the NY Corn Growers Assoc. and Cornell faculty and Extension. AG

“Future of the Agri-Food System – Perspective from the Americas” was the theme of the World Agricultural Forum's 2004 Congress of the Americas. The program has been placed on the Minter Institute website, www.whminer.com. The proceeding will be available soon.

Contact Marc Turco (Miner Institute) for information on particular topics. AG

Weather Data – 2004 and average of 1999 - 2003

	Argyle		Easton		Whitehall		Jackson	
	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Last Year
Rain Past Week	0.58	0.80	1.13	0.96	0.48	0.56	1.10	1.93
So far this month	6.77	4.01	6.31	3.96	6.10	3.23	6.63	4.08
Total since April 1 st	8.67	5.78	9.20	6.06	8.23	6.31	10.40	6.14
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	154	107	157	116	159	128	161	120
Since April 1 st	633	525	717	590	785	657	655	569
GDD 86/50 [hi temp + low temp]/2 - 50 High's >86°F are set to 86°F, low's <50°F are set to 50°F								
Past Week	84	79	94	87	90	92	88	77
Since April 1 st	519	443	593	516	606	532	558	507

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	\$2.97/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$190/ton
Soybean per bushel	8.55/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	75/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	84/ton	Wheat, soft white	4.17/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	269/ton	Tallow per pound	.19/lb

These prices are provided only to show where the general market trends are moving and to help you determine appropriate ration ingredients. Local prices will vary due to shipping, processing, and discounts.

DAIRY NOTES:

Another week or two and most of you that were able to beat the monsoon rains and damaging hail will be able to open your bunks and silos and feed this years feed. Makes sure to test forage and monitor cow health during this transition. One way that the cows will tell you if it is time to take a forage sample or make changes in the ration is by observing the manure consistency in the herd. Manure screening will tell you a lot about the health of the cow such as rumination, sorting at the bunk, feed efficiency, etc. For example, if the rumen is functioning well, meaning there is sufficient rumination with adequate effective fiber and “reasonable” retention, you shouldn’t see lots of course fiber (many particles >0.5 inches). About 5% of cows in a group will have manure different from their herdmates. So be observant when it comes to manure consistency because it is a way to get a sense of how cows and their rations are interacting.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: We haven’t heard yet that the Department of Labor inspections have started but beware, since we are so close to Albany we are likely to be some of the early appointments on their calendars. Fallout from the weather incident in the southern zone of the county will continue to have an impact. USDA – FSA is putting together documentation to apply for disaster designation. If you haven’t talked to someone, please call FSA at 692-9940.

FUEL STORAGE AND TRANSPORT: At the DEC website give last week, <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/bulkstor/>, there is a worksheet to determine if you must register your fuel storage with NYS DEC. To avoid registering your tanks, you must store less than 1,100 gallons of fuel for vehicles, and less than 1,100 gallons of heating fuel. The US EPA has regulations for underground tanks over 110 gallons. Any underground tanks that were installed before 1986, must be upgraded to the standards established in December 1985. Any tanks installed after this date, should follow the same regulations.

Transporting Fuel – the Dept of Transportation regulates the transportation of fuel. To avoid regulation (having a hazardous materials drivers license, vehicle placards, shipping papers, and \$1 million of insurance), the *deisel fuel* tank in the back of your pickup truck must hold less than 119 gallons. If it holds more than 119 gallons, it must be comply with DOT specifications for a portable tank. However, you can have more than one tank in the back of your truck, as long as none of them holds more than the 119 gal. (ie. three 50-gallon drums).

CROPS

Soil Quality: Today I saw some corn that could not emerge through a silt loam that crusted over because of our pounding rains. Crop residues or other “mulches” help prevent crusting, as does a high soil organic matter content. Our recent rains have caused lots of erosion. The best soil is at the bottom of the hills and in the road ditches. If last fall or early this spring, you soil a field that has been highly eroded, it would be interesting to take another soil test this fall and compare the results of before and after erosion. You should have a plan to build organic matter in these fields: applying manure, planting a sod crop, planting cover crops, etc.

Hail Damage: I took another look at fields damage by hail on May 24. Regrowth is very slow. Plants have to shift gears from the reproductive stage to the vegetative (regrowth) stage. I think that some fields are still I the reproductive stage (producing flowers and seed heads), because they were flattened like a pancake, but only half way. To help the plant shift gears to the regrowth stage, these fields should be harvested. Someone can make a buck by designing a “splash plate” to go on the chopper so that this forage can be blown back onto the fields without leaving piles of chopped forage.

Alfalfa: Alfalfa regrowth is just beginning to a couple of inches tall. There is some alfalfa weevil feeding on the regrowth, but I have seen only modest infestations. You should check our fields. If 50% of the stem tips have larvae, then control measures are justified (Baythroid, Lorsban 4E, Warrior T, Ambush, Pounce). **Potato leafhopper** have arrived. I have seen only moderate numbers. Regrowth should be treated if there are >5 PLH in 10 sweeps of a standard sweep net. New seedings should be treated if there are >2 PLH in 10 sweeps. Check regrowth. If you have PLH resistant alfalfa, you can rest easy. Spread manure on alfalfa fields in less than 3 days after cutting. Regrowth will be damage if you run over it.

Field Corn: A worksheet to determine if you need to replant a field can be found at <http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/pubs/AY-264-W.pdf>, or give me a call for a copy. Many fields can be “replanted in spots”. If 50% of the field is lost, then it is likely that replanting will be

economical. If damage is less, then you have to gather some information and make a decision. Roughly (for grain and silage):

For fields with >16,000 plants remaining, there is a 5 – 8% loss for each 4,000 plants damaged.

For fields with <16,000 plants remaining, there is a 8 - 10% loss for each 4,000 plants damaged.

Then for each week of delayed planting there is a 4 – 8% loss/week until mid-June and a >10% loss after mid-June.

Consider the cost of inputs to replant and estimate the yield you need to make up for the loss. **Approximate net gain or loss from replanting = (yield loss due to later planting + loss compensation) – decline in yield.**

I am seeing purple corn in a few places. This looks like phosphorus deficiency. It was probably caused by cool temperatures and lots of rain that washed away nutrients. The deficiency seems most prominent in highly eroded places.

Grasses: In the mid west, armyworm has damaged some corn and wheat fields, but none have been seen in New York (from Ken Wise). When you get insomnia, take a flash light and walk through a grass hayfield to look for armyworms feeding on the grass blades – they are nocturnal.

Pasture: Bedstraw has been in flower and should be mowed to prevent it from spreading by seed.

VEGETABLES

Scout your fields this week. Many insect populations are due to increase at this time (cucumber beetles, Colorado Potato Beetles, leafhoppers, corn borer) and the warm weather will increase activity. Also scout your plants for stress. Many crops are pale and shallow rooted. The cold, wet weather has slowed growth and already stressed plants. The hot temperatures and drying weather (especially with the possibility of wind) will dry the soil surface (crusting) and plants out quickly. (CC)

Cucurbits: *Cucumber beetles* are a concern now as they are usually out and ready to pounce on newly emerging or transplanted cucurbits. The most serious concern is that they carry *bacterial wilt* disease. So, be especially diligent with wilt susceptible varieties, including some of the newer mildew-resistant pumpkins like Merlin and Magic Lantern. Vine crops up to the 4-6 leaf stage are most susceptible to bacterial wilt infection, though the disease often doesn't appear until much later. If you treat transplants in flats with Admire for cucumber beetle control keep in mind that it only lasts about two weeks. Foliar sprays (up to weekly) will be needed if beetles are present before vines start to run. Applications of Admire at label rates to direct seeded plantings should last longer. (OWYS Weekly Veg Update)

Seed Corn Maggot: The damp cool weather is favorable for seed corn maggot and some growers have had damage. The fly lays eggs on the soil surface. The larvae then move into the soil and feed on large seeded crops (beans, corn, peas, spinach) as they begin to germinate. Damage can look like chewed, browned seedlings with poorly formed cotyledons, wilting and

dying seedlings (look for a hole in the side of the stem- they tunnel in and eat the stem from the inside) or no seedling emergence where they eat the seed before it even emerges. Plantings done after June 10 miss the first generation- the most damaging one. Fields with a large amount of debris and organic matter (newly broken ground) tend to have higher levels. (CC)

Solanaceae: The single most important tactic for Colorado Potato Beetle (CPB) management is to rotate this year's fields at least 100 yards from last year's fields. Rotated fields are colonized later in the season and at lower densities of adult beetles, producing fewer larvae to control, and makes summer generation beetles emerge after the induction of diapause (after August 1st), hence fewer summer generation larvae to control. If the field to be planted can not be rotated away from the previous year's field it may be possible to plant a row of potatoes treated with a systemic insecticide (for example, Admire) between overwintering sites and fields to be planted to potato, tomato, or eggplant; this trap crop will kill many of the colonizing beetles. The larvae can then be controlled using a *Bacillus thuringiensis*-based insecticide (such as Novodor-Cry3Atoxin). This approach will reduce beetle exposure and resistance development to Admire. (from Umass Veg Notes)

Many acres of potatoes in the central NY area have been lost and growers have ordered seed for replanting. Early potatoes in drier locations are 6 – 8" tall. Note that a number of entomologists in the Great Lakes region have warned that soil applied insecticides may have leached below the rooting zone with the heavy rains we've had so scout for *Colorado potato beetles*, especially if you used a low rate. WNY CCE Pestminder, 5/26, C. Hoepting - Standing water was present in some potato fields 5/24. In some cases hills were washed right out. If seed was pre-cut and held long enough for cut surfaces to suberize/heal before planting, or if freshly cut seed was in warm soil for a few days before the heavy rains there is a greater chance for it to survive in saturated soils, according to Cornell Potato Specialist Don Halseth. Potato plants can compensate some for skips in the row. Breaking the crust over the seed will get more oxygen to the seed and can speed emergence. (OWYS Weekly Veg Update)

Sweet Corn: From Abby Seaman's Western NY Pheremone Trap Network: ECB moths are being caught in high numbers (115-250) in Hall and Farmington this week, catches at other locations are at moderate levels (0-33). At a field started under plastic this morning, new corn borer egg masses were very easy to find. The tassels were just beginning to emerge from the whorl. Split field demonstrations have shown that applying insecticide to corn for worm control before tassel emergence does not produce better results than waiting until the usual tassel-emergence timing. Corn started under plastic or row cover is an exception to this rule. Fields started under plastic or row cover will be most attractive to egg-laying moths because the plants are larger than those in bare ground fields. We have found that using the usual tassel emergence scouting and thresholds for plastic or row cover corn doesn't work well. John Mishanec has had good results in trials in which pheromone trap catches were used to time sprays in row cover or plastic corn. Growers waited until there was a significant increase in the ECB trap catches in their area and then timed sprays to coincide with egg hatch. ECB eggs require 100 degree days (base 50) from oviposition to hatch.

Weeds: Quadris/Chlorothalonil Combination - Quadris Opti is now labeled and available in NYS for potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, celery, vine crops, and dry beans. Quadris Opti contains the protectant fungicide chlorothalonil (as in Bravo/Equus) ensuring that Quadris won't be applied alone. This is very important to slow the development of fungi resistant to Quadris and other fungicides in that class (strobilurins). The combination material Quadris Opti will be cheaper than tank-mixing equivalent amounts of the two materials on the farm. (from J. Bulkeley, Syngenta)

Landscape: Four-lined plant bug is busy on a variety of plants in the landscape and even in display pots. Look in Rudbeckia and Daisies first. Check sown in the center of the plant as these insects are quite shy and like to feed where you cannot see them.

Iris borer larvae are feeding between leaf folds or in the flower stems now. The borers will move down from the above ground tissue into the rhizome over the next week or two. For best control Dimethoate should be applied when growth is 5-6" high. Parasitic nematodes (*Steinernema carpocapsae*) have been found to be very effective in controlling borers. They should be applied at the base of the plant when the soil temperature is between 50 and 90 degrees F. **Day lily thrips** damage on foliage is becoming very evident now. Use Conserve or Orthene, especially if you have had problems with this pest in the past.

Defoliated trees seem to be the main problem in Washington County this week. The **hail damage** that the South and Central Cambridge area suffered is the worst I have ever seen. Trees and shrubs, including conifers are completely stripped of leaves. Those of you who have damage from the **Forest tent caterpillar** know what I mean, but unfortunately the hail damage is much worse. Bark has been stripped from most of the terminals and large bark wounds exist on scaffold and trunks. For deciduous trees and shrubs owners should prune our dead, broken and bark stripped branches. Do not apply wound paint to any of the wounds. Trim ripped bark as best you can. The sooner the pruning is completed the better chance that new growth will be initiated. I expect that many of the healthy mature trees will re-leaf, but I am concerned about small and stressed plants. If we move into a drought period this summer, these trees should be watered at a rate of 1"/week. A mulch layer 3" deep and out to the drip line would help conserve soil moisture, moderate root zone temperature and help reduce weed pressure.

Fruit trees should be thinned of any remaining crop. A very basic maintenance spray schedule should be considered to prevent disease problems. If you are an avid home orchardist you may want to consider a foliar analysis later this summer to see if you can tailor a nutritional plan for these trees. If you are a commercial orchardist and have not spoken with our Fruit Specialist, please call Kevin Iungerman at 885-8995.

Forest Management for Hail Damage (this is an excerpt from an email from Dr. Peter Smallidge, Cornell University):

1. Safety in the woods is the primary concern. Wind may have broken branches, which haven't yet fallen. Hard hats should always be worn, especially now.
2. There is no immediate need to conduct any salvage harvesting, especially on hardwoods. Large areas of severely damaged conifers may attract bark beetles, but you have a few weeks at least. Decay in hardwoods takes a relatively long time especially from small wounds on small

outer branches. Decay expansion in hardwoods is about 12-18" in year one and reducing rates thereafter as the disease gets into areas with less oxygen. Branch tip damage takes many years to reach the merchantable butt log.

Owners should consider their ownership objectives before taking any action. Damage is no doubt different from what they wanted, but it may have minimal impact on why and how they use their land. Don't rush into a decision. All decisions should be made in consultation with a professional forester who can view the damage in person and appropriately integrate actions with objectives and opportunities.

3. The ability of a tree to survive depends on its vigor, especially root vigor, at the time of damage. Unfortunately this is the worst time of year to strip branch tips because the roots just pumped their reserves into fresh foliage. Trees adjacent to recent skid or tractor trails likely will suffer due to loss of roots from road building. Hardwood trees with healthy roots may refoliate this summer. If trees don't refoliate in a few weeks (by late June) they likely will never recover. I'd be optimistic on refoiliation of the hardwoods. I don't recall ever seeing a conifer refoliate. Thus, if a conifer is 100% stripped of foliage it likely won't survive, but still give it a couple few weeks for signs of recovery.

4. Trees that are knocked over won't recover and can be salvaged. Avoid damage to roots of potentially surviving trees. The majority of roots are within the drip line of the tree, but some important and fine roots extend beyond the drip line. The fewer skid trails installed and the further they are from desired residual trees, the better chance for healthy neighboring trees. Just because you can sell some salvageable trees doesn't mean you should. You might do more damage to future crops than the value that is salvaged.

5. There is no ecological or pathological advantage to cleaning up the debris. Advantage to clean up benefits visual and access objectives. That said, if cherry branch were stripped, that fresh but torn foliage is toxic to livestock and the branches may serve as habitat for the cherry bark beetle

6. Any harvesting done by non-family members should be under contract that protects the owner from liability. Wind blown debris is often twisted and under extreme tension and only experienced operators should work in these areas. Recreational firewood cutters should avoid any debris/slash that has any appearance of being under tension. I'd suggest not cutting firewood for at least a year. Sale contracts will likely need to specify a sale price per unit volume harvested. The log trucks should be noted (date and approximate volume, but ideally scaled by the owner's forester on the landing) and mill slips should be forwarded to the owner. Under salvage conditions it is very difficult to estimate volume and value pre-harvest.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
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